

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed on March 29, 2004 ("Office Action"). Applicants appreciate the Examiner's consideration of the Application and the Examiner's acknowledgement that Claims 3-5, 9-11, 15-17, 22-29, and 32-39 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Although Applicants believe all pending claims are allowable over the prior art of record without amendment, to expedite issuance of this Application Applicants have

- 1) canceled Claims 1, 7, 13, 20 and 30 without prejudice or disclaimer;
- 2) rewritten Claims 5, 11, 17, 22 and 32 in independent form; and
- 3) changed the dependencies of Claims 2-4, 6, 8-10, 12, 14-16, 18, 21, and 31.

These changes do not narrow at least Claims 5, 11, 17, 22 and 32. None of these changes are considered necessary for patentability. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgement that Claims 3-5, 9-11, 15-17, 22-29, and 32-39 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and the Examiner's allowance of Claim 19. Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.104, Applicants respectfully issue a statement commenting on the Examiner's reasons for allowance. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's reasons for allowance to the extent that they are inconsistent with applicable case law, statutes, and regulations. Furthermore, Applicants do not admit to any characterization or limitation of the claims, particularly any that are inconsistent with the language of the claims considered in their entirety and including all of their constituent limitations, or to any characterization of a reference by the Examiner.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this Application in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and full allowance of all pending claims.

If the present application is not allowed and/or if one or more of the rejections is maintained, Applicants hereby request a telephone conference with the Examiner and further requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney to schedule the telephone conference.

The required fee of \$180.00 is submitted herewith for the IDS and is believed to be correct. No other fees are believed to be due. However, if this is not correct, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts, L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,
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